

## Karachi calm as more arms recoveries made

F.P. Bureau Report

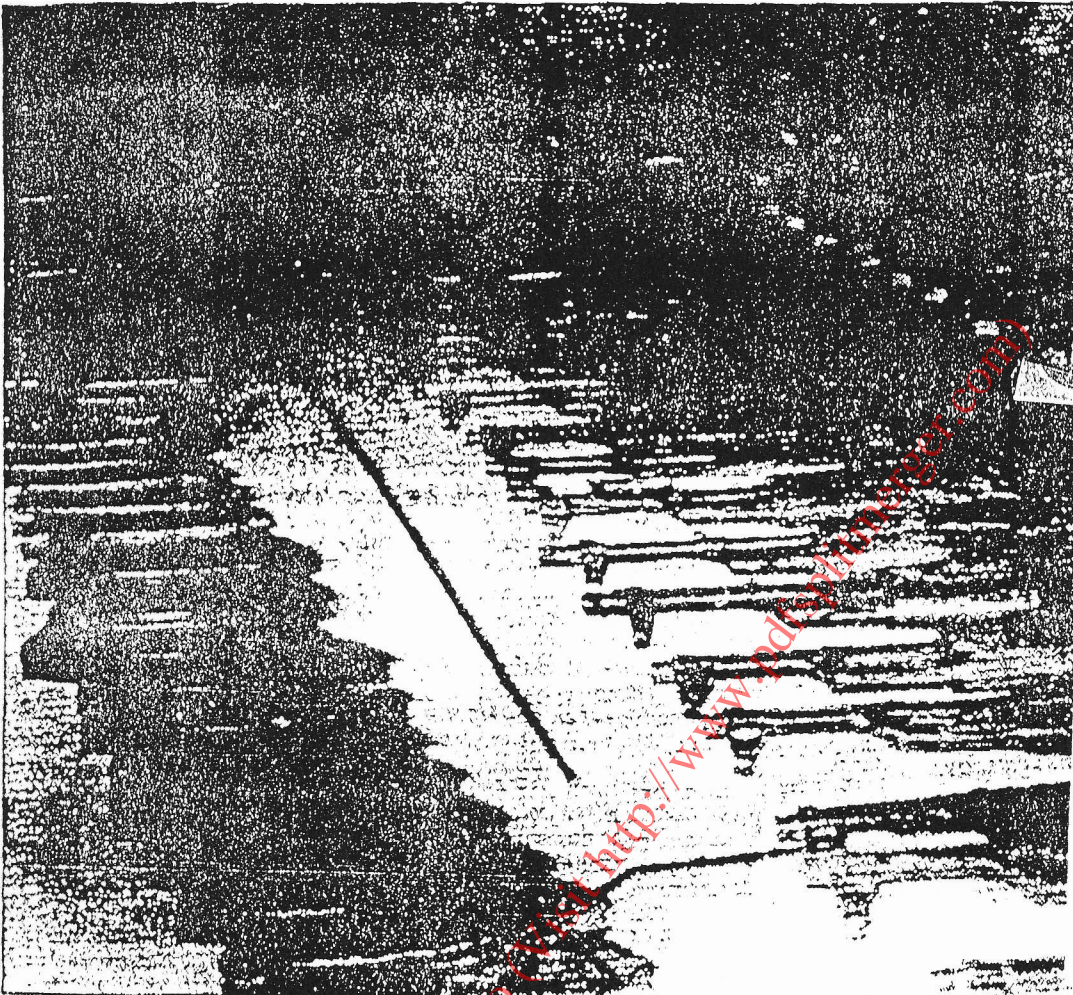
**KARACHI** — The situation in Karachi remained calm and no untoward incident was reported from any part of the city while the police with the help of rangers arrested a number of persons and recovered arms from their possession.

The total number of those arrested 67 during the last two days has now reached 67. The arrests were made from Landhi, Korangi, Shah Faisal Colony, Liaquatabad and Lines area.

According to a army spokesman, 21 Klashnikovs, 13 7-MM rifles, four shot-guns, two stenguns, two carbines, four double barrel guns, ten 22 bore guns, 59 magazines, 19,242 rounds, 16 stolen cars and 18 motorcycles were recovered. Two Klashnikovs, one high machine gun, one 7-MM rifle and 1,000 rounds were recovered from Al-Karam Square, the central office of MQM at Liaquatabad.

The army spokesman denied the reports that army had conducted a house-to-house search at Al-Karam Square or any other place. He said the raids were conducted by the police accompanied by the rangers and magistrates on authentic informations about the terrorists hideouts.

He said the army was impartial and would remain non-partisan and had provided protection to the MQM leaders on their request. He added that not a single prominent person belonging to MQM including MNA, MPA or minister was held during the operation.



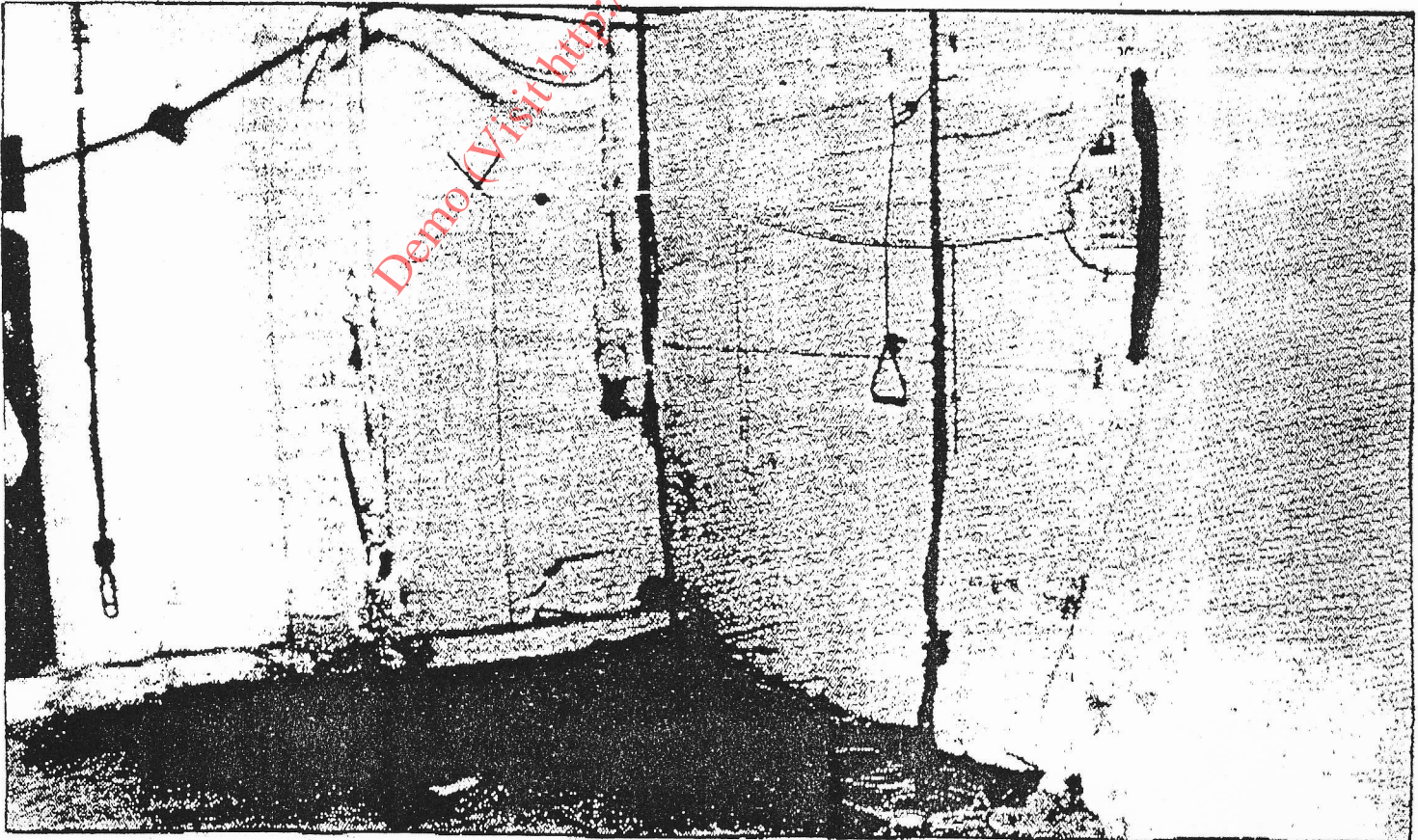
Weapons recovered by security forces during raids on hideouts of the Mohajir Qaumt Movement (MQM) are on display in Karachi on Monday. The army has discovered 17 torture cells allegedly run by the MQM.—AFP photo



## Facts speak for themselves



Rangers loading weapons recovered from MQM in Lines Areas.—F.P. photo



A view of MQM's tortures cells in Lines Areas, where political opponents were used to be tortured.—F.P. photo



# The Frontier Post

National Daily published simultaneously from Peshawar & Lahore

ZILHAJ 20, 1412---MONDAY, JUNE 22, 1992



Sabra Begum (C), mother of Kamran (picture) tells how her son was allegedly tortured to death by supporters of Ali Haf Hussain, founding leader of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement while her five-year-old grandson (R) looks on. The army moved into the central and eastern districts of Karachi after eight people were killed and 30 injured in clashes between rival groups from the MQM on Friday.---(AP photo) (More photos on page 5)



# Ashfaq reveals MQM leadership's

By our correspondents

## involvement in heinous crimes

he News October 28 1992

KARACHI Ashfaq Qureshi, an activist of MQM (All Pakistan) who is being interrogated by a Joint Interrogation Team of law enforcement troops, in his confession has made disclosures about the involvement of his party's top leadership in crime of heinous nature. In an attempt to murder and burn alive the people from the rival political groups and set their houses ablaze, official sources said.

The MQM activists, sources said, targeted the MQM's quite disgraced with the kidnapping of people in its attempt to get decided to go back to Salim Shahzad or Zonal chairman Masood Nabi to snap people of rival group, sources added.

Five men were abducted from Orangi Town. Malik, Rehman, Haidar, Zafar and three from Orangi No. 3, Anwar, Anis, Ansari, Arshad, Dr. Haidar and Ar-

shad Kamal brought the rest from Orangi No 1. The kidnapped victims were brought to the residence of Arshad Kamal from where they were to be shifted to Peel Kolhi, the infamous torture cell.

In view of the curfew restrictions they could not shift the bodies and after about two days they were shot dead. Later on their bodies along with the Suzuki which carried them were burnt alive at Mangho Pir, the confessional statement narrated.

The accused, disclosing about the murder of one Hashim Raza, said that in January 1989, a meeting was being held in the office of Unit No. 132. Besides him, Chief, Shalid Bashir, Nek Muhammad, Kamal Ansari, Javed Chattri, Asghar Rizvi, Ashiqain and Ashfaq Jan were among the participants of the meeting. Some altercation took place and there was a total chaos. During the chaos and Khalid Dada and Saifur shot Hashim Raza dead on the spot.

Ashfaq Chief, sources claimed, further confessed that at the end of 1989, five houses of a particular ethnic group were set ablaze and burnt to ashes in Qasba Colony on the orders of Salim Shahzad. It so happened that one Farid and his brother were shot at by some unknown people. Farid was killed and his brother injured.

The accused confessed that he, on the instruction of Salim Shahzad, took the decision to set these houses ablaze and entrusted Masood Nabi, Arshad, Nek Muhammad, Rafiq Bhai, Mushtaq Rizvi and Hanif Patani to do the job. Fire was set by Hanif Patani, Majeed and one Qasim.

Ashfaq Chief revealed, official sources said, that Salim Shahzad one day instructed all sectors to exercise vigil and ordered elimination of Badshah and Amir Khan who were supposed to enter Karachi in a day or two. They were told that they would be coming in a Pajero jeep. The MQM activists from Bal-

dia Town started checking vehicles on main road. Ashfaq disclosed adding that Majeed, Qasim, Amin, Waseem Qadri and Furqan were doing this job on motorcycles. After a while Pajero jeep with dark glasses did not stop during checking and rather it speeded up. Hanif and Qasim opened fire with Kalashnikov rifles from a nearby petrol pump resulting in on the spot death of Malik Salim, son-in-law of Pir Sahib of Pagaro.

The MQM activist, intelligence sources said, further revealed that Councillor Anwar Ahmed was killed by Shohi, a body guard of Altaf Hussain, on the orders of Salim Shahzad.

He also disclosed that one Faisal of Landhi was abducted by Shehzad Mirza, Hafeezur Rehman, Masood Nabi, Dr. Saifur Bagri and Anwar Siddiqui on 19 June and was taken to Salim Shehzad who ordered to kill him on suspicion of spying against Altaf Hussain.

According to the sources, Ashfaq said that Masood Nabi was abducted by some activist of Altaf group on suspicion of changing loyalties. Larar, Rehman, Waseem and Waqar abducted him and brought him to sector office where Masood Nabi, Sohail Akbar, Shehzad Mirza and Saifur Bagri were present. He was sent to Tehkani torture cell where he was killed by Tahir Mirza. This was ordered by Shehzad Mirza and his body was thrown out in the open.

Ashfaq Chief revealed that one Rashid Akbar was abducted by Rehman, Sohail, Amir and Masood and Waqar on the orders of Salim Shehzad. He was also taken to Chhowni where he was tortured by giving electric shock.

Hafeez, Sohail, Amir, Masood Nabi and Shahid Mirza were present on the occasion. When the victim fell unconscious he was shot dead by Tahir Mirza on the order of Salim Shehzad, sources concluded.



MAY 1, 1994

PAKISTAN  
CALLING

## Cases against top MQM leaders

KARACHI: Cases have been registered against the self-exiled founder of MQM, Altaf Husain, main party leaders and workers, on charges of murder, arson, destroying government property and hatching a conspiracy to commit crime punishable by death.

Apart from Altaf Husain, the prominent party leaders against whom FIRs have been registered in various city police stations on behalf of the government are: Senator Ishtiaq Azhar, Senator Afrab Shaikh, Senator Nasreen Jalil and her husband M.A. Jalil, former Karachi Mayor Dr Farooq Sattar, ex-MNA Kinwar Khalid Younus, Yaseen Siddiqui, Hasan Musanna Alvi and MPAs Haroon Siddiqui, Kazi Khalid Ali, Babar Ghouri and Shoaib Bukhari.

No case has, however, been registered against Dr. Imran Farooq, the secretary general of the party, who has been underground for the last two years.

A spokesman for the police, however, said only 218 people had been arrested for causing breach of the peace.





## Police register sedition charges against Altaf

Cont. from page 1

chief Altaf Hussain, acting party leader Ishtiaq Azhar, Dr Farooq Sattar and six other senior party members.

Altaf Hussain has lived in exile in Britain for the past two years. None of the other eight had been arrested, police said.

The registration of a complaint marks the start of a formal police investigation into a suspected crime before charges are brought before a court.—Reuter

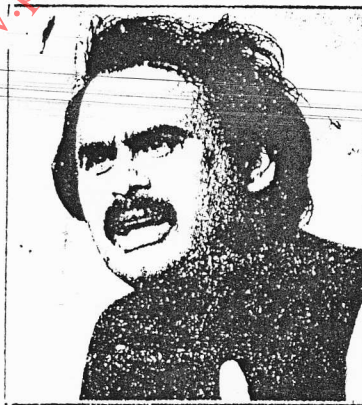
## Police Register Sedition Charges Against Altaf, Ishtiaq and Other MQM Leaders

KARACHI: Pakistani police said on Monday they had taken the first step toward charging nine politicians with sedition, after three people were killed and 18 wounded in rioting in Karachi on Sunday.

The violence erupted during a general strike in the port city called by the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) to protest against alleged maltreatment of a woman by security forces, a charge denied by authorities.

Several buildings and vehicles were set ablaze.

Police said they registered a complaint for sedition, which carries a



MQM Chief Altaf Hussain maximum punishment of 25 years in prison, against self-exiled MQM

Cont.



Karachi, Tuesday, June 23, 1992

## Cases against Altaf, 13 others registered

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI, June 23: Three cases of murder, kidnapping and other crimes have been registered against 14 leaders of MQM, including Mr Altaf Hussain, now in London. The FIRs were registered on the complaints of Mohammad Shahid, Mumtaz Begum and Rais Ahmed. All residents of Landhi.

The Landhi Police on the complaints of area residents registered three separate FIRs against the MQM leaders on Monday. All the MQM leaders were booked under Section 302, 364, 452, 145, 147, 336, 436, 115 (read with 34) of PPC and Section 17(3) of Hudood Ordinance.

The cases have been registered against MQM's Secretary General Dr Imran Farooq, Vice-Chairman Sattar Shahzad, Provincial Industries Minister, Dr Safdar Baqri, MPA Ashfaq Chief and the chief of Pakistan Steel Mills, CBA, Khalid Murtaza.

The other MQM activists are: Rehan Zaidi, Ashfaq Zaidi, Israr Waseem, Javed Kazmi, Ismail Qureshi, Irshad Naeem, Khalid Haji, Jalal Khan and Asghar Khan.

All the cases have been handed over to the Military Intelligence to investigate the authenticity of charges levelled against the MQM

In his complaint, Mohammad Shahid claimed that the MQM leaders had kidnapped and killed his brother. He alleged that his father was also kidnapped by them and later released after a severe torture.

Another complainant Mumtaz Begum said that his son Shoaibullah Khan along with his two friends Irshad and Rasheed, was kidnapped, by MQM leaders some time back. Mumtaz Begum alleged that she tried to register an FIR of the incident, but failed because of the influence of MQM leaders.

The third FIR was registered on the complaint of one Rais Ahmed who levelled similar charges on the MQM leadership.

However, the Karachi Police are maintaining extreme secrecy about the registration of these FIRs. The officials of Landhi Police Station on a query refused to give details of the cases registered against the MQM leadership.



# DAWN

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## Confession by Chief Ashfaq

KARACHI, Oct 22: Ashfaq Chief an activist of MQM (Altaf Group) being interrogated by a joint interrogation team, in his confessional statement has made extraordinary disclosures about the involvement of his party's top leadership in crime of a heinous nature which include murder, attempt to murder and burning alive the people from rival political groups and setting their houses ablaze, official sources said here on Thursday.

The MQM activist revealed that Markaz was quite disturbed with the abduction of people of its students wing.

It decided to strike back and Saleem Shahzad ordered Zonal Incharge Masood Nabi to abduct people of the rival group.

Five men were abducted from Orangi Town. Faizullah, Rehan Butt and Zafar kidnapped three from Orangi No. 10, while Kamal Ansari, Arif Baboo, Nek Muhammad and Arshad Kamal brought the rest from Orangi No. 1.

They were brought to the residence of Arshad Kamal from where they were to be shifted to "Peeli kothi".

The accused, disclosing about the murder of one Hashim Raza, said that in January 1989, a meeting was being held in the office of Unit No. 132. Besides him, Shahid Bashir, Nek Muhammad, Kamal Ansari, Javed Charteri, Asbat Rizvi, Ashqam and Ashfaq Jan were among the participants at the meeting.

Some alternation took place and there was total chaos. Firing began and Sarwar shot Hashim Raza dead on the spot, the sources added.

Ashfaq Chief further confessed that at the end of 1989, five houses of a particular ethnic group were set ablaze in Qasba Colony on the orders of Saleem Shahzad.

It so happened that one Fareed and his brother were shot at by some unknown people.

Farid was killed and his brother injured. The accused confessed that he, on the instructions of Saleem Shahzad, took the decision to set these houses ablaze and entrusted Masood Nabi, Arshad, Nek Muhammad, Rafiq Bhai, Mustaq Rizvi and Hanif Fatani to do the job. Fire was set by Hanif Fatani, Majeed and one Qasim. —APP



# Frontier Post

WEDNESDAY JUNE 24, 1992 ZILHAJ 22, 1412

LAHORE

NATIONAL DAILY FROM LAH

## MQM leaders go underground in Hyderabad

F.P. Bureau Report

HYDERABAD, June 20: A mysterious calm looms over the twin cities of Hyderabad and Latifabad, which, according to political observers here, may prove a lull before storm any moment.

In view of the armed clashes in different parts of Karachi on Friday claiming at least five human lives and enforcement of curfew in various vast areas of the metropolitan city, the security in both the cities has been tightened and the troops of different law-enforcing agencies including army have intensified patrolling on different roads since last night.

People were found scared, but tight lipped and very cautious in offering comments about the developments in Karachi.

According to reports, the flags and the banners of the MQM, however, were removed from some parts of Hyderabad and Latifabad and the portraits of Altaf Hussain defaced in some parts. Besides, the office of MQM merkaz at Bhai Khan ki Charhi is reportedly being guarded by armed MQM guards since last night presumably to resist and foil any attempt on the part of dissidents to capture the said office. There are indications that most of the MQM leaders have gone underground and the reports are that a high level meeting of the MQM leaders of Hyderabad was held last night at some secret place to discuss the situation created in Karachi and its likely effects on Hyderabad. It is understood that the MQM leadership of Hyderabad is awaiting the directives issued by the MQM high command, Karachi, and MQM leader Altaf Hussain from London.

Continued on page 2

## MQM leaders go underground

Continued from page 1

As for the dissidents, they are divided in more than one groups in Hyderabad. One such group, it is said has overpowered MQM leadership in Kotri and its leaders claim that Kotri city is virtually under its control now.

People of these twin cities are so much scared that in various

parts businessmen and shopkeepers opened their shops by midday today.

Meanwhile, it is also being apprehended that in order to avert infighting among MQM, an attempt, as a last bid might be made to give it a different turn by converting it into Sindhi-Muhajir clashes.



PAKISTAN CALLING

MAY 1, 1994

# Hundreds of MQM men rounded up

KARACHI: In a major provincewide crackdown, the law enforcement agencies on Thursday rounded up hundreds of MQM workers and supporters, including two former top leaders, Tariq Javed and S.M. Tariq.

The operation, which began on Wednesday soon after a high-level meeting at the Chief Minister's House, which was attended by senior army officers, was carried

out simultaneously in all the cities of the province. The house-to-house search was still continuing when this report was written late on Thursday evening.

In Karachi alone, police formally arrested or detained for interrogation at least 350 workers and supporters of the MQM or their relatives during raids on hundreds of houses.

At some places, specially in Baldia Town, where seven people were killed on Wednesday, security forces acquired the help of policewomen in their house-to-house search.

Residents claimed that the law enforcement agencies had also arrested many minors in Baldia Town.

Most of the people arrested during the crackdown, had been rounded up soon after the beginning of the operation clean-up, but later released on bail.

Some Baldia residents claimed that there were at least eight hooded armed men who had

ambushed the police-Rangers convoy in an isolated lane.

The police have accused seven MQM workers of the murder of four policemen and a Ranger. They are Farooq, Javed, Ghaffar, Amin, Haroon, Ibrahim and Anis. All of them are at large.

Though no figures are available from the interior of Sindh, MQM leaders claimed that party workers and their relatives had been arrested in Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Nawabshah and other parts of the province.

Reports from official and unofficial sources indicate that over 800 people have been arrested throughout the province, mainly from Hyderabad and Karachi, so far.

The crackdown forced a majority of active MQM workers to go underground. The law enforcement forces took into custody their relatives.

MQM MPA Kamran Jafri, who was accused by the army of masterminding the attack on the police-Rangers convoy in Baldia on Wednesday, too, went underground after military authorities pressured the party leaders to hand him over to the nearest police station.

The Patni Mohalla of Baldia Town and its surrounding area remained under an unofficial curfew for the second consecutive day on Thursday.

The provincewide crackdown has created tension in Mohajir-dominated areas of the province. Baldia Town, however, remained peaceful, but tense.



# Frontier Post

SUNDAY JUNE 21, 1992 ZILHAJ 19, 1412

LAHORE

NATIONAL DAIL

The  
Frontier Post

Tuesday, June 23, 1992

## MQM—death merchants of Karachi!

From M. ILYAS KHAN

KARACHI — On the elaborately paved and widened street outside the supposedly largest torture cell unearthed in Karachi, a resident of the area pulled this correspondent by the sleeve and asked: "Does Muzaffar Shah, Nawaz Sharif or Ghulam Ishaq deserve to rule this country?"

And he was not very wide off the mark. Some of the worst horrors were committed by the MQM in the very thick of Tunisia Lines, about half-a-mile from Irfan Marwar's dreaded CIA, about one-furlong from the Brigade Police Station and a mere 100 yards from Pakistan Army's FME Workshop 602. Yet it continued to exist for 14 months until the dissidents stormed and evacuated it last Friday.

During this time, several ministers of the governments of Jam Sadiq Ali and Muzaffar Hussain Shah frequented the place and were offered full protocol. Besides, important MPAs and MNAs of MQM, a partner of both the provincial and central governments, also paid regular visits for the purposes of inspection.

Around a vast cluster of pigeon-hole houses of the poor of the area, a 25 yard alley was cleared by the MQM's local unit command on April 29, 1991 to create the privacy they needed to deal with "the train-

ers." Three houses were taken over, while residents of the rest of the houses in the street were told to punch their outlets in the back alleys and close their front gates. The inmates of these houses are privy to the hue and cry of victims which continued to rise from the torture cell for over one and a half year, but they knew better than to blabber in wider circles.

"I lived in the house next to the torture cell till about two months ago. I finally decided to shift from here because my wife became hysterical. She used to hear the cries of torture victims and could not bear it. Several times she would break into tears and implore me to do something about it. In the end, her condition deteriorated. On the mere suggestion of morning sound from across the wall, she would pass into a hysterical fit. I had to leave lest the boys found out about her condition." This was narrated by a navy official who had come to watch the torture cell.

Another resident of the area, Ayub Ali, said although he lived only about 40 yards from the place, it was the first time in 15 months that he stepped into this street. "Both sides of the street were blocked by the unit boys. Even if somebody was found staring into the street, they would catch him," he said.

About the last three houses on

the southern end of the street, Ayub Ali said as their backwalls adjoined other houses, they were compelled to use their front gates, and they were allowed to do it too.

But in 14 months they did not receive a single guest, because that they were not allowed to do.

In the backstreet, a lady said: "The torture cell is on the far side of the main street. With the rans on and all that, we never heard the cries or whatever. They told us never to walk onto the front street and we never did. Otherwise they did not have much to do with us."

Inside the torture cell, there was a chamber for physical torture of the initial kind, equipped with ropes and nooses and the paraphernalia for mechanical and electric therapy. At the far end a door led into a narrow and short corridor full of humidity and stench. It opened into a courtyard which had been converted into a gymnasium where victims were administered more severe treatment. Latif Muhammad alias Lari, a local dissident leader, said those with broken arm bones were made to lift weights here.

Irfan Ali, son of Farman Ali, a fragile skinny boy of 18, said he was kept in the cell for one month. He claimed that during this period he was given nothing to eat except liquids. He showed this correspondent various marks on his body

including a 4-inch slit on right wrist inflicted by a knife, and blackened marks of electric shock. He was treated to electric therapy in a separate chamber located in the house which was vacated by the aforesaid navy official.

But this is nothing compared to what happened to Nadim, another lean 18-year-old of the area. He displayed a 5-inch mark on his left hip which he alleged was caused by the rod of a drill machine used on him by his tormentors. He was kept in the cell for only 16 days because the wound went bad and began to rot with worms.

Shehzad, another victim, said a coke bottle was stuck up in his anus during the torture. While admitting this, he began to tremble and lost his voice, then broke down and cried. All these boys were picked up because of their relations with Kamran and Murad, two dissidents of the area who were both killed. The purpose of torture was to extort information about the dissidents.

Faizu said that many others were killed by the unit boys, and then either buried in the nearby Societies' graveyard or "sold to Edhi trust for Rs. 5,000 a piece." He said in some cases they would call the family of the dead to see the body before burial, while in other cases they even did not bot-

her with this formality.

Faizu also said that Cate Student, which is famous all over Karachi for its Biryani, supplied food for three to four hundred people of the unit every day beside paying daily cash sums running in four figures. Apart from this, all the shopkeepers in Lines Area paid Rs. 1,000 per month as protection money to wards the unit beside compulsory buying of MQM's official magazine, *Pak-Awa*.

Anif, who is the owner of the house in which the torture cell was located, said that 14 months back the boys of the unit asked them to vacate their tenant, a navy official, because they wanted the house. "My brother came down to speak to them that evening, but he was told that they expected to take possession of the house in two days."

He said he had returned to take first look at his house in 14 months. When asked if he was offered any compensation by the unit, he replied in negative. Not even the promise of compensation, he said, adding that there was only one way to get it back.

"You mean the way things happened on Friday?" asked this correspondent. He nodded with a smile. In reply to the question as to what he would do with the house now, he said, "May be I'll sell it. May be I'll rent it out again."



"And cover not Truth with Falsehood nor conceal the Truth when ye know."

## *The Frontier Post*

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# End of a fascist organisation?

Army operation in Sindh may have 'facilitated' the outbreak of rebellion within the MQM, but the split was simmering for over a year. The assault of the 'Haqiqi' group on the strongholds and offices of the official MQM bespeaks organisation, the sort for which Altaf Hussain was so famous. The least bit of uncertainty would have doomed the rebellion to failure and resulted in the summary execution of the rebel leaders. Altaf Hussain in London thinks that the 'secret' agencies master-minded the split and that the rebels were allowed to use transport provided by the Rangers, a clear indictment of the federal government. That two MQM MPAs from the Sindh Assembly have decided to support the Haqiqi group might mean that more of them might join the rebellion provided the army prevents the backlash from the orthodox pro-Altaf elements through its preventive strategy. The coming week will be decisive as Altaf Hussain rallies his teeming followers through his famous telephone messages. The Haqiqi group is demanding investigation into MQM matters that had remained hidden from public view. As the press reports additional 'revelations', the image of Altaf Hussain will suffer, putting his followers under pressure. The group is also demanding fresh elections in the province, which brings them into some kind of informal alignment with the PPP leaders in Sindh demanding the same. The picture therefore is still complex, making it difficult to decide as to whose advantage the MQM split redounds.

There has always been an ambivalence in Islamabad's relations with MQM. The truth of the matter is that no

government can afford to relate normally to an organisation which is a law unto itself. MQM may have been a useful ally for an IJI looking desperately for a foothold in a province where its arch-rival the PPP has substantial representation. But the former's ability to impose decisions on the administration seriously curtailed the ability of Islamabad to deal fairly with the ethnically divided Sindh. News about how the secret agencies were manipulating the various strong personalities within the MQM, sometimes with big pay-offs, has always circulated in the national press. It appears that the fascist juggernaut of Altaf Hussain, built by General Zia, has keeled over because of the monetary spoils it soaked up without spreading them out evenly. It will now be easier dealing with a divided MQM than it was with a united MQM whose writ sometimes clashed with that of the state. How will the state benefit from this easing of the ethnic situation in the province? The centre took advantage of the split within the PPP and got Sindhis to punish the Sindhis, while helplessly allowing the MQM to rule the cities in Sindh and tame the administration. Now the MQM split has 'balanced' the situation. If Islamabad's own plans don't change and the elimination of the PPP and the punishment of its Sindhi supporters is still on the agenda, then Sindh will go into another phase of terror and destruction. If however, the new agenda is to set up a consensual government in Karachi to bring peace to the province, then the erosion of the fascist MQM leadership is an opportunity that should not be missed.



# MQM: portrait of an ethnic organization

Frontier Post -- March 92-

---by-Zwittenon

## The Frontier Post

National Daily published simultaneously from Peshawar & Lahore

When in 1979 the APMO was formed, little notice attended its creation. Altaf Bhai and Abbasi Shaeed Hospital were as yet to come years away from becoming household names. Even when the MQM was born the event did not merit the attention of the general public, but this was probably the time that the ISI moved in to deliver the Frankenstein.

And then came the fateful and fatal miscalculation of Bushra Zaidi and an unknown mini-bus driver, and the resulting collision unleashed a round of blood-letting that shook the country - Frankenstein had got off the operating table and had taken to the streets.

The huge success of the Nishtar Park congregation on 8 August 1986, followed by the Shohrab Goth mayhem 31 October 1986 signaled the birth of a new force in the politics of Pakistan. It also signaled the fallibility of Zia's conspiratorial genius because, like India's Bhindranwale, his genie too had run amok and would not be put back into the bottle.

Because of its ethnic basis, the formation of the MQM was a tragedy for Pakistan - a cruel blow to a country which needed unity for its survival even more urgently than our politicians need non-refundable bank loans for theirs. Yet this tragedy, though not deserving of forgiveness, was one that could easily be understood. And often understanding touches the periphery of condonation.

The formation of MQM was history's response for more than three decades of governmental banter of national interest in preference to the leaders who led us to the sink. The steady progression has been from bad governance, through non-governance to outright bedlam. Tyranny can work, but when tyranny takes crass incompetence for a wife, it spawns a vacuum which takes the place of its writ.

In this situation people will form groups to ensure their security, and having found such security, the momentum of their motives force will propel them to acquire dominance over contending interest and groups. This is why MQM was born, and if we continue on the merry road that we have taken, there will be many more such groups. As such this is not a disease peculiar to the Mohajirs. If it were, Ijazul Haq would never have won an election from Toba Tek Singh.

But there was a silver lining to the MQM phenomenon. They threw up a youthful, dedicated leadership from the middle class, and gave substantive form to something that had lain so long only in the folds of our imagination. With a real-life role model in existence, it was hoped, that following MQM example the rest of us too would get rid of the accumulated refuse of forty years, and throw up a fresh, vibrant dedicated, and patriotic leadership.

But as our hopes were daring to peer from around their veil, Altaf Bhai's mask started giving way. The first assault came from weak rumours that Bhai Saab may not be all that he is made out to be, that he may actually be more human than is generally supposed.

The fair-minded among us brushed such rumours aside - cancelling them against consciousness of ingrained prejudice. But the rumours persisted, and even went to the extent of audaciously suggesting that Bhai Saab may even be more human than some of us. Any doubts that this may caused were throuled

by the suspicion that well-concerted disinformation may be at play. But the rumours still persisted, and loudly proclaimed that Bhai Saab was actually so human so as to be nothing but an out-and-out rogue. Now this caused some unease. It is not possible for a rumour to live unless it breathes at least some air of truth.

I was in a state of this unease when I met Aamir and Afag, the two young MQM dissidents. My meeting with them was the rudest rebuke to my hopes. "Et-tu-Bhai Saab" I thought. And when the interview ended, I broke the nib of my pen, as judges are fabled to do after signing a sentence of death.

And now over to Aamir Khan: "I was only about sixteen then, a student, when I heard about Altaf Bhai. He had formed the APMO. I wanted to see this man. When I did, I said to myself that he was to be my leader. I was one of the first to join. The trickle soon became a flood. The Mohajirs had long felt deprived and insecure and insulted. Their interaction with the Punjabis and Pathanas unfortunately confined to the ruder elements. This was not an experience for us to cherish.

When the APMO was formed we were elated. This was to be the embryo from which would grow our redemption. We wanted to honor Bhai Shaib. He was to be our Quaid - for ever and always. He would never have to submit himself to the indignity of seeking an election. That was for mortals only. From APMO to the birth of the MQM was a very short and natural step. Yes I have heard that the ISI had sponsored the movement as a check on the power of the Jamaat, but I cannot confirm this. Though I would not be surprised if this were so, because there were no visible impediments put in our path by a dictatorial regime, as we grew from strength to strength. This strength was first put to test after the Bushra Zaidi incident. We were severely mauled because the Pathans and Punjabis were well armed, and we did not know the first thing about weapons. But nothing did more to swell our ranks than this incident and its aftermath. It is after this that we vowed never again to take it lying down. We too would train and arm ourselves.

"The MQM was the most dedicated and disciplined force in the country - much more so than the army. And we were being led by the best leader in Pakistan - in the world. The first signs of dissent came when Bhai Sahib, who was then in jail, reasoned that only if we have a voice, and that without a voice we would not be able to achieve even one of our aims".

"We swept these polls. The consequent euphoria muffled the dissent but not the doubts. And then came the '88 Elections. The dissidents did not want to take part in these for exactly the same reasons as above, but Bhai Shaib went ahead on a repeat of his earlier reasoning. There was another victory, and another swell of euphoria. But the doubts persisted - only more strongly."

"The final break came when the name of the movement was changed to Mutahidda Qaumi Movement. This would have been fine had this change been made after the original aims of the movement had been achieved but this was not the case. We had not achieved even one of these. It is now for the first time that we started to doubt the sincerity of our Quaid. We started daring to look behind his mask of infallibility that we had ourselves put over him. For a young man who is both emotional and idealistic, it is perfectly possible to convert an ogre into an idol. "Could we have done this, we feared."



# MQM: portrait of an ethnic organization

Frontier Post -- March 92-

---by-Zwittenon

"Our first doubts were that Bhai Sahib had substituted 'Mutahidda' for 'Mohajir' only because he wanted to enlarge the stage, and thus his personal power, which he no longer necessarily saw as synonymous with the power of the movement. As a matter of fact we strongly suspected that the design of Bhai Sahib was to arrogate all the power to himself, and make the movement entirely subservient to his will."

"With disillusionment coming to us as sight to sore eyes, we started to see our Quaid in realistic light. And the more we saw, the more disillusioned we became. We were now increasingly daring to think past the cloak of invincibility with which we had adorned our leader. 'He was not much of a leader, after all', we thought. He only inspired us at the high tide when no inspiration was really needed. Actually it is we who inspired him each time the tide threatened to recede. He is a nervous man. His spirit deserts him the moment he perceives a difficulty. That is when he gathers us all in to lift him up. Yes, it is we who made him. There is nothing beyond oratory to this man. His only real achievement was the formation of the APMISO, for which we crowned him king for life and imposed tunnel vision upon ourselves."

As we started seeing more clearly, we became conscious of a qualitative change in our leadership. We noticed that whereas earlier each one of our leaders would, as a rule, be in the field with the workers, the rule now seemed to be to remain huddled among themselves. Of the zonal heads, the only exceptions to this rule were Afaq and myself. The consciousness of this change frustrated us to the point that we also gave up our efforts. It became a burden for us to move out of our houses. And so increasingly, there we stayed.

Our prolonged absences were felt by the workers. Their questions about our change of attitude became an embarrassment for Altaf. He now became conscious that our dissent cut deeper than he had thought. With embarrassment came fear. If anyone could calculate the consequences of the inversion of this dedication, none could do so better than him. He saw in us his nemesis. He would have liked to have us eliminated, but was not too certain whether he would be able to contain the fallout. So he asked to go the States for a while. He said our presence, given our attitude, was creating difficulties for him, and these difficulties were hampering the progress on the very issues that were sore points with us. We were told that once these issues were resolved we could return.

We were three of us. Afaq, Badar and me, who were taken by Altaf to the US consul general and promptly our visas were stamped. It did not occur to us then that Altaf's rapport with Americans could have a significance beyond what met the eye.

In Chicago we had little to do but think, discuss, and help one another remove our many remaining blind spots. We started by putting Altaf's background in better perspective. The man first broke through anonymity when he was awarded five lashes and nine months rigorous imprisonment. The lashes were done away with, but he went through with the nine months - and this period is symbolic, since he had a rebirth after this.

We then examined his family, two brothers and a sister residing permanently in the States; one brother in Saudi Arabia, but with a green card; and Altaf Bhai too was a proud owner of a similar license. This did not go to make the most impressive credential for a person who has any commitment other than to the USA. Yes, of course he ordered the MQM to celebrate the 91 Pakistan Day as never before, but this was pure politics. This

USA. Yes, of course he ordered the MQM to celebrate the 91 Pakistan Day as never before, but this was pure politics. This man has never gone to the Mazar of Quaid on his own, except to burn the Pakistan flag.

The most interesting find in Chicago was that Altaf's sister paid quarter of a million dollars cash to buy her house. We were not surprised, we were aghast. And before we could blow our top, came the sobering revelation that Altaf owned a fair-sized hotel in Chicago, but that for good form the title to this property was on the name of his brother-in-law.

On reflection we found that all the property that should have belonged to MQM had been shared out between Altaf's family and friends. And we had worked like slaves to collect our funds in pennies - from the sale of animal skins slaughtered at Eid; from donations; and by selling ourselves - Altaf for one crore rupees for each on the MQM MNA's who voted against Benazir during the no-confidence motion. Also, I cannot deny that large donations by the rich were the result of extortion, but I was never used for this. But all this was MQM money and Altaf had simply taken it!

The consequent conclusion that our chief was just a common thief, was a crushing blow. But the most crushing of all was the consciousness that we, each of us, bore complicity in the greatest sin of - listening to treason; and abetting it; if not by our assent, then at least by our silence. Altaf's innermost circle, of which I was a part, were routinely treated to a pet sermon. We were repeatedly reminded to make ourselves ready to throw ourselves on the bayonets of the army. The army, we were warned, was our enemy number one. "It is against the army that the last battle will have to be fought", we were told.

Slowly this theme unfurled itself. The ultimate aim of the MQM could not be merely to be recognized as a fifth nationality. This would be unworthy as an ultimate aim. The ultimate had to be independence - to have our own state. That was where the showdown with the army would come.

This was the Hong Kong Plan. The scenario painted was that the West was looking for an alternative to Hong Kong, and that no city better suited to fill this role than Karachi. The West would therefore be agreeable to any move which could bring this about, and so would India. All we had to do was to defeat the army and gain sufficient control of Karachi and surrounding area for the USA to have a legitimate case for granting us recognition. There was never a single voice of dissent against what Altaf propagated at these meetings. We had programmed ourselves into believing that Altaf could do no wrong.

Yes, Altaf was in touch with both India and the USA on this issue. I know of at least one meeting for which he went to Dhahran - I think it was. Here he met a CIA operative and discussed the plan with him. I know for certain that he also sent an emissary to India, who met everyone who was anyone, except Rajiv. The meeting with Rajiv was planned but could not take place. Yes, I know the name of the emissary but will not give it because his family will be butchered by Altaf's men, and that family is innocent.

As we discussed the consequences of our involvement in



## MQM LEADER ALTAF HUSSAIN - A SKETCH BY MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Altaf Hussain did not migrate to Pakistan in 1947 but was not yet born even. He was born at Agra 6 years afterwards in 1953 and migrated to Pakistan in 1954. This young man came of a poor family but was mercurial and dynamic. His capabilities of being a catalyst of masses were noticed by Rais Amrohvi, Prof. Karrar Husain and late Siete Hasan who promoted him in every respect until he controlled the University as President, Mohajir Students Federation (MSF) in mid 70s. Interestingly, Azim Ahmed Tariq, the present Chairman of MQM was Secretary General of Altaf Husain's MSF. The two later formed the initial core of MQM. The hold of MSF loosened in the early 80s and it virtually disintegrated due to divergent political and sectarian factions that cropped up within it. In 1982 Rais Amrohvi, a rabid Shia, worried by Shia-Sunni tension in Karachi which was refusing to be papered over introduced him to Agha Hasan Abidi of BCCI and Mustafa Gokal for using his MSF to counter the influence of Sunni Islami Jamiat Talba (IJT), the battering ram of Jamaat-e-Islami and Swad-e-Azam Ahle Sunnat (SAAA) which was dominated by Sunni Ulema like Maulana Asfandiyar from up-country. But by then the MSF had lost its cutting edge and slid into backyard of student politics. Altaf Husain was arrested for the first time on 14 August, 1979 alongwith Afaq Shahid ex-MNA at Mazar-e-Quaid-e-Azam for staging a demonstration for repatriation of stranded Biharis. He alone suffered the difficulties of trial as his arrest made no ripple on the smooth waters. In 1983, Altaf Husain, a defeated and disgruntled man proceeded to USA for higher studies but found his ambitions bogged down due to economic factors and ended up as a taxi driver. It is claimed by knowledgeable circles that Imdad Mohammad Shah, the son of G.M. Syed had sponsored Altaf Husain's visit to USA.

Hope had alluded him and he was like a pot cracked in many places, held together by the thin wire of will to break out of the encirclement of circumstances. His days in USA still haunt Altaf Husain and he makes every effort to hide his background of a taxi driver. Like an ineffectual angel beating about its wings in void, he was at times seen advocating Mohajirs there but without much impact. His efforts to cut a bigger role for himself appeared to be futile.

Mohajir Qoumi Movement was formed in Karachi on 18th March, 1984 while Altaf was still in USA. In June 1985, Altaf Husain returned to Pakistan to launch MQM but received just a stammering response from his community in the beginning. According to an estimate, MQM spent about 16 lacs in Karachi and 4 lacs in Hyderabad on the grand receptions in his honour. In the political circles, then, MQM was viewed as a foster child of Rais Amrohvi. Rais Amrohvi, Khaliq Allahwala, Wajid Shamsud Hassan (Editor, Daily News) alongwith Prof. Karrar Husain, Dr. Aliya Imam and Akhtar Rizvi were seen in the forefront of MQM.

The Mohajir-Pathan sectarian riots in October 1986 as a result of the death of a Bihari student Bushra Zaidi in a road accident acted as a catalyst which sparked MQM into prominence and propelled Altaf Hussain to attain the status of unquestioned spokesman of Mohajirs. He was jailed by the Government but it gave him more advantage than suffering as it served as an impetus to his popularity.

MQM is a cult of sentimentality and unreason flourishing on ridiculous political half truths. Although the hard core of MQM consists of the middle and lower classes struggling in the toils of their malaise, what marks its followers is a mentality rather than a class. It is a party of social outcasts, of opportunists as well as malcontents - people of every sociological coloration.

Altaf Husain has a following, held together less by rationality than by volatile emotions. He is a grand tactician of oratory who can whip the emotions of his audience to fever pitch. It is a curious coupling of delirium and irrationality that characterises his oratory. He bleats out ridiculous political half truths but always remains an alert master of his emotions. A constant effort of will is demanded to be what he wants to seem to be. His speeches stir millionfold expectations and millionfold anxieties and crank up the audience into a collective orgy. On the stage he performs as if he has inhaled the feelings of his audience of being victimised, of fear, of hatred. He has around his person a certain lunatic aura.



By Rawal Bakhsin

# The MQM's New Clothes

In a bid to project a new image, the MQM turns its eye on southern Punjab, causing tremors of anxiety to reverberate through both mainstream and nationalist parties in the region...

Altal Hussain's voice booms out to the audience, as pigeons and colourful balloons are released in the air, accompanied by music and fireworks. Hundreds of MQM supporters sit enthralled by the oratory as the extravaganza gets underway. But this is no run-of-the-mill MQM rally of the kind witnessed in urban Sindh on countless occasions, with the obligatory telephonic message from the Quaid beamed in from London. Rather, the scene of the MQM's December 25 rally is hundreds of miles away from Karachi or Hyderabad – deep in the heart of the Punjab.

After its metamorphoses into the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Altal group) has turned its attention to the southern Punjab, in its effort to become a broad-based political party. The MQM's December 25 rally, held at a busy chowk in the bustling city of Multan, was the first such massive show to be held outside the province of Sindh.

A festive mood pervaded the air and the show was certainly impressive, even though participation by the local population was conspicuously absent. If nothing else, the rally served to prove that the ethnic party still has the resources – and the following – at its command



Farooq Sattar, Ishiaq Azhar and Altal Shaikh widening their net

to move hundreds of supporters from Karachi and Hyderabad to Multan, along with all the paraphernalia for an extravaganza of this sort. Banners, flags, portraits of Altal Hussain, lights, carpets and hundreds of MQM supporters were hauled – or lured – to Multan, in order to ensure the rally's success. The few local residents actually in attendance, meanwhile, witnessed for the first time a political event of such pomp and circumstance.

One critic of the MQM, in

fact, described the whole affair as anything but political. However, the rally did suggest that Altal Hussain himself, as well as other MQM leaders, seemed quite aware of the socio-political environment of the region. For example, the speakers specifically targeted traditional feudal politicians in their speeches and appealed to the people not to vote for tyrants and exploiters in future. Moreover, in an effort to portray the new MQM as a broad-based political party, and to shake off its mohajir

ethnic affiliations, announcements were made in Sindhi, Seraiki, Balochi, Punjabi and Pushto, as well as in Urdu.

As a run-up to the Multan rally, MQM leaders including its convener, Senator Ishiaq Azhar, Dr Farooq Sattar and Hyderabad mayor Altal Shaikh, as well as other MQM leaders, had visited Multan, Shujaabad, Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Rajanpur, Khanewal, Dera Ghazi Khan and other cities and towns in southern Punjab to address corner





■ Altaf Hussain: making inroads

meetings. They also appointed party organisers at various levels in these areas. And with the Multan rally, the MQM's intentions to enter the political fray in the Punjab were clear.

In an earlier attempt to make inroads into the province, the MQM contested by-elections from Muzaffargarh district on a national and a provincial assembly seat, both of which had been vacated by Ghulam Mustafa Khar. A Seraiki activist, Ghulam Hameem Bhatti, was the MQM's candidate for both seats, but managed to secure only about four hundred votes.

It is clear that the MQM chose the constituencies of Muzaffargarh and Kot Addu because of their large mohajir populations. At the same time, however, it strategically attempted to ally itself with the Seraiki-speaking population. Graffiti on the walls of both towns testified to this shift in strategy, with slogans like "Seraiki-mohajir ittehad zindabad" and "Seraiki-mohajir bhai, bhai."

Although the MQM now calls itself 'the party of 98 per cent oppressed population of the country', and considers it expedient to move away from exclusively mohajir politics restricted to the province of Sindh, political analysts take a cynical view of this new development. They suggest that the MQM's forays into the

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Punjab and its new-found radicalism are part of a strategy to shed the widespread allegations of terrorism, and to sell the MQM to a non-mohajir electorate.

Despite the fact that its candidate failed miserably in the by-elections, the MQM leadership apparently believes it can deliver on both counts. For one, the urban centres in the Seraiki region are predominantly populated by mohajirs – both Urdu and Punjabi-speaking. It is perhaps only a question of time – and strategy – before this potential vote bank can be

mobilised in the MQM's favour. In fact, the recent general elections proved that ethnic divisions in this area are sharper than ever before, with the mohajir electorate by and large voting for the PML(N) and Mian Nawaz Sharif, harvesting the crop of ethnic contradictions. In this respect, at least, the MQM is not wrong in believing it can snatch its share of the mohajir vote away from the PML(N).

Naturally, PML(N) workers are distressed by the MQM's forays into the province. They fear that the MQM may succeed in weakening the

popularity of the PML(N) in the urban centres of southern Punjab. It is quite clear that if the MQM goes ahead with its plans in the Seraiki belt, it will manage to eat away at Nawaz Sharif's vote bank, even if it fails to overthrow the PML(N) altogether. It is perhaps for this reason that a mohajir supporter of Mian Nawaz Sharif in Muzaffargarh was bitter about the fielding of an MQM candidate in the by-election. He was of the opinion that this move was part of a conspiracy hatched by the PPP to destabilise the PML(N) in the area.

Meanwhile, Seraiki nationalist parties are closely watching the MQM's activities in the southern Punjab. Taj Mohammad Khah Langah, president of the Pakistan Seraiki Party, has openly criticised the MQM's public meeting at Multan, arguing that it will only fuel ethnic tensions. The Seraiki Qaumi Movement, which was initially inspired by the MQM and is now led by Hameed Asghar Shaheen, has expressed strong resentment against the MQM as well. However, this party's somewhat peculiar argument is that this latest move is a conspiracy against the people of southern Punjab. They believe that the MQM will introduce terrorism in the area and thus force investors to shift their capital to central Punjab. Seraiki writers and intellectuals, meanwhile, have not yet come up with their views regarding the MQM's incursions into the province.

Seraiki nationalists aside, those who believe in mainstream politics – and feudal politicians who are the direct target of the MQM's latest onslaught – are worried that the so-called Mutahida Qaumi Movement will cause further political polarisation in this part of the Punjab. They fear that in response to the MQM's politicking, Seraiki-speaking voters may rally round Seraiki radicals, deepening ethnic divisions in the short run. They also fear that this polarisation may lead, in the long run, to heavy losses for the two major political parties, the PPP and the PML. ■



# MQM casts a dark shadow over Lahore

**C**URIOS events involving the MQM leaders and dissidents took place in Lahore last week. After the Government had taken the position in the High Court that the MQM dissidents, who had sought refuge in the city, had been arrested in connection with an FIR about some terrorist acts, the detenus were suddenly released. The High Court was informed that they had been found innocent. There were rumours that the decision to release the detenus was taken by Authority at the highest Federal level.

In an apparently panicky reaction to this development, almost the whole body of MQM legislators, including Ministers at the Centre and in Sindh, descended on Lahore to address a Press conference the like of which the city had never seen. They not only affirmed their fealty to their supremo but also declared that they would use bombs to blast the houses of anyone betraying him. They threatened the Press correspondents that they would have to familiarise themselves with the language the MQM was effectively using in Karachi. The newsmen walked out in protest but were soon persuaded to return.

Later, the Punjab Chief Minister tried to further appease the MQM mission by announcing a gift of Rs. 50 million for the relief of people affected in the Pucca Qila (Hyderabad) operation last year. (Details elsewhere).

#### PDA's decisions

The PDA leaders have decided to observe a protest day on August 4. Leaders of the parties in the alliance (Ms Benazir Bhutto, Air Marshal (Retd.) Asghar Khan, Allama Sajid Naqvi, Malik Mohammad Qasim and Mr Mohammad Afzal Khan) will observe a day-long hunger strike in protest against the passage of the 12th Amendment and the recently

promulgated Ordinances. Similar demonstrations are planned for the provincial capitals.

The attempt made by the Acting President of Azad Kashmir, Mr Ishaq Zafar, to seek a court injunction against the meeting of the newly-elected Assembly has failed. The Azad Kashmir Supreme Court heard a reference made by him and declined to grant a stay order. The Acting President had asked the Court's opinion on a reference about the situation created by doubts about Mr. Mumtaz Rathore's dismissal as Prime Minister and complaints of rigging in the polls and the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner as the state's chief executive.

However, an All Parties Conference convened by Mr Ishaq Zafar, and attended by all Azad Kashmir political parties except the Muslim Conference, demanded Mr Rathore's reinstatement, rescission of the recent election, fresh polls, constitution of a national government for the interregnum, and sacking of the Kashmir Affairs Minister. Ms Benazir Bhutto, who was received at the Karachi airport on her return from abroad by the Acting AJK President and had meetings with Mr Mumtaz Rathore in Islamabad, made a strong statement on the 'gross mistake' made in dealing with Azad Kashmir. Islamabad had done what Delhi had been guilty of in the In-

dian-held Kashmir, she said.

**T**he Foreign Office deemed it necessary to reassure the people (and possibly foreign countries) that despite the movement of Indian troops along the borders there was no imminent danger of conflict between the two States. The need for this clarification arose, in the opinion of the Foreign Office, because Gen. Aslam Beg's reference to some new threats to the country's integrity and the designs of its traditional enemies had been wrongly interpreted in some quarters. These quarters were not specified.

#### The economic situation

The economic situation appeared to have deteriorated further. On the one hand, newspapers reported a 15 to 20 per cent increase in the prices of essentials within a short period, there were reports on the other that IMF was not well disposed towards Pakistan's request for balance of payments support because it did not accept its budget statements as correct or fairly drawn up. The Government did, however, succeed in resolving problems in collecting the withholding tax.

The PDA coordination committee tried to go one up on the Government by accusing it of trying to compromise on the nuclear programme. The Alliance said it was opposed to nuclear proliferation but it would not sacrifice national interests. At a time when the Government was making some signs of taking the UN five-point plan somewhat seriously the Alliance high command chose to express concern at reports that the Western countries had reduced their aid to the Mujahideen.



Lahore

## The MQM makes a weird debut

ADNAN ADIL

**T**HE MAIDEN performance of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement in Lahore left a poor impression not only on journalistic circles but in the city as a whole.

Newspapers readers in the city perhaps have never before read about politicians saying that they would be committing incest if they betrayed their leader, Altaf Husain.

In fact, the whole news conference, addressed by 35 MNAs and MPAs of the MQM was a weird experience for the local Pressmen. Earlier, when invitations to the Press conference were sent out, they did not say whether newsmen would have the privilege of meeting MQM dissidents or loyalists.

Anyhow a very large number of

journalists turned up at a five-star hotel, the venue of the Press conference. Such was the interest among the journalists that each paper was being represented by two or three reporters -- in one case by four. A number of Government officials belonging to the Press Information Department, local intelligence personnel and policemen were also there. Only when nearly 50 MQM men, including workers and legislators guarded heavily by police reached, the venue, did one come to know whom one was going to meet.

The news conference started with video camera lights on and to the astonishment of newsmen, a telephone was relaying the proceedings to Altaf Husain in Karachi. Khalid Siddiqui, MNA from Hyderabad, in a written statement, said that the Press conference had been called to remove the

misunderstandings and disinformation spread by certain newspapers in Lahore regarding the rift in the MQM. He said that there was no split in the MQM. Planted news were part of a conspiracy against his party.

He said that the conspiracy was being masterminded by the exploiting class and some intelligence agencies to block the way of the MQM and prevent it from becoming a countrywide movement of the oppressed. The new name the MQM was adopting was the Muttahidda Qaumi Movement (United National Movement), he said. About the MQM dissidents, he said, they had sold themselves for few pennies at the cost of collective interests of the Muhajirs. The main thrust of his address was on the claim that the MQM was united under the leadership of Mr. Altaf Husain and conspiracies to divide it would end in failure.

He urged the people of the Punjab to raise a leadership cadre from among themselves and reject the exploiters who had been ruling them for centuries.

The Pressmen were, by and large, not in a receptive mood and Mr. Siddiqui was interrupted several times by laughter and occasional hooing. Much fuss was created when MQM leaders announced that each one of them (and there were 35 of them) would speak. Many objected, saying it was not a public meeting and that reporters should be allowed to ask questions. However, the MQM men insisted and started a chorus which hit the headlines in part of the Press the next day.

One MQM legislator got up and said that he was not capable of winning a seat in the Assembly in his personal capacity and that he owed his success to Mr. Altaf Husain in whom the people had blind faith. If he ever betrayed his leader, people could question his parentage, he added. All others who followed nearly repeated the same lines. The reporters were laughing at them and booing the representatives of what an MQM leader said was the most civilised section of Pakistani society. At one time, a threatening posture struck by a fiery MQM speaker led to a temporary boycott of the proceedings.

— Continued on page 32



**D**EVELOPMENTS within the MQM are getting more bizarre, bringing strength to its detractors' charge that it is not a normal political party but a mafia of some sort.

About two weeks ago, a group of MQM dissidents was driven out of Sindh to seek safety in the Punjab. They complained, mostly in frightened whispers, that their associates and relations had been harassed and alleged that the danger of arson, murder and possible torture had compelled them to flee their homes. Soon after their arrival in Lahore, most of them were arrested,

detained and interrogated by intelligence agencies. When the matter was taken to the High Court, they were first charged with being responsible for the Shahdara bomb blast; under judicial scrutiny, the charge withered within two days, and they were all pronounced innocent and released.

### The loyalists

As if to counter the presence of the dissidents, a five-star hotel in Lahore was selected for a demonstration of faith in their fuehrer by large number MQM Ministers, MNAs and MPAs. With Klashniokov-toting guards protecting them, the participants, individually and severally, took blood-curdling oaths of loyalty to their Quaid. One loyalist was so carried away that he called Altaf Hussian his 'kaaba'; others joined in to hurl imprecations and curses on themselves, and sought condemnation to such unforgivable sins as incest if they ever betrayed their leader. They also breathed sulphur and fire against the dissidents for their betrayal, and promised that they would be eliminated by the people or that suicide squads of MQM legislators would blow up their houses. MQM leaders got quite excited and threatened the Lahore Journalists that they would get the same treatment as given to their Karachi peers if they did not report MQM proceedings fully and properly. They also alleged that they were under surveillance of intelligence agencies, but were determined to make inroads into the Punjab and set up their organization in the rest of the country. It was also made plain that the MQM remained loyal to Nawaz Sharif and Jam Sadiq Ali.

Starting with the display of banned weapons, almost every part of the proceedings was in violation of the law. Will Chief Minister Wyne send for a report on what took place in Lahore? Will he act at least to prevent its repetition? The MQM dissidents have rightly pointed out that the campaign of intimidation is meant to frighten them into submission. Irrespective of which group is correct in its approach to the organization's future, every citizen has a right to express his opinion freely, without fear, and the Government has a duty to give him or her full protection. Whatever its other faults, the main MQM group may be right in espousing the cause of the middle class or asking for a land tax, but the content of its message is lost in its

fascist methodology.

MQM histrionics have in the past been treated as a joke, but it is no longer amusing. Prospects of what more it can do are frightening, because it seems to have powerful allies in Karachi, Islamabad and elsewhere.